

## **DRAFT PROPOSED FISHING RULE CHANGES FOR 2008-2009**

### **Statewide rules**

1. Change size restrictions on crayfish/minnow traps to be not larger than two feet in any dimension.

Rationale: There is no biological reason for trap size, and retail traps are already available which are larger than our current 18" x 12" size limit.

2. Allow seine nets and cast nets to be up to but not larger than 10 feet in any dimension.

Rationale: The current net size is restricted to 4' x 4' and there is no biological reason to keep at this size. To keep it under control we chose a 10' length limit.

3. Require the use of one single pointed barbless hook and sliding sinker while sturgeon fishing.

Rationale: We have biological concerns about indirect mortality of sturgeon ingesting a baited hook which has been snagged by the sinker on the bottom in heavily fished sturgeon waters. By requiring a slip sinker and only one hook, if a rigging is broken off then the sinker would separate from the hook, and reduce the chances of "phantom" hook-ups.

4. Make it illegal to fish with live aquatic organisms (leeches, salamanders, shrimp, etc), except crayfish.

Rationale: Recently concerns have been expressed about introducing aquatic nuisance species that have the potential of biological or financial consequences. We feel it is best to reduce the potential for vectors that may bring these changes to Idaho. It is already illegal to transport live aquatic organisms to Idaho without a permit from the Department, however it can be extremely difficult for field personnel to identify imported species. Crayfish may already be used as live bait only in waters from which they have been caught.

5. Change the general bass rule for that portion of the state North of and including the Salmon River drainage to six bass any size, year-round season.

Rationale: Exploitation of bass has not been a problem in most north Idaho waters. Quality fishing rules for bass will still be listed as exceptions. This will reduce entries in the regional exceptions, because anadromous fish waters already have a no size limit rule.

### **Panhandle**

6. Change quality bass rule to two bass, none under 16 inches, year-round season. This applies to Chase and Robinson lakes for both bass species. It applies to LMB only in Anderson Lake, Blue Lake, Hayden Lake, Lake Pend Oreille, and the Pend Oreille River. SMB would be six fish any size in these waters, just like the rest of the region.

Rationale: These are primarily the waters currently open to quality bass rules, but to simplify the rules we have dropped the split season with a catch-and-release component before July 1 and a slot limit after that date. Harvest opportunity will be on smallmouth bass in most of these waters.

7. Cutthroat trout rule changes:

We propose to go to the public with several options to reduce the harvest of westslope cutthroat trout. The Clark Fork River, Lake Pend Oreille, and the Spokane River drainage upstream of Post Falls Dam are being considered for restrictive rules.

Rationale: The goal is to provide protection for this fish that had been petitioned for listing under the ESA and to greatly simplify fishing rules in the Spokane River system.

8. Modifications to winter stream seasons:

Season would go from December 1 through Friday before the General Stream Season opener (C&R for trout during WSS with same gear type as allowed during general season).

The new list would include Little North Fork Coeur d'Alene River, North Fork Coeur d'Alene River, South Fork Coeur d'Alene River, Spokane River, St. Joe River, and St. Maries River.

Rationale: Increases opportunity for stream fishing.

9. Moyie River – Open all year, two trout.

Rationale: Increases opportunity for stream fishing.

10. Mirror Lake – Trout two, none under 16 inches, no bait, (open all year).

Rationale: To offer a diversity of opportunity by providing a quality trout fishery in one of the small lowland lakes.

11. Bonner Lake – delete as a quality trout lake, general limit applies.

Rationale: This lake wasn't producing trout of quality size, so a six fish limit will provide a better fishing experience for anglers who want to take a few fish home.

12. Coeur d'Alene Lake

Kokanee – 6 fish limit

Chinook – 2 fish limit

Rationale: To protect the spawning year classes of kokanee, to rebuild the population to appropriate levels.

13. Hayden Lake

Trout – 2, none under 16 inches

Bass – LMB - 2, none under 16 inches, SMB - 6 any size

Crappie – 6, none under 10 inches

Season – all year for all species

No more inlet closures, no more tributary closures on Hayden, Mokins and Yellowbanks creeks. The streams would revert to general stream season.

Rationale: To simplify fish rules on Hayden Lake and spread out harvest of crappie.

14. Lake Pend Oreille

Bull Trout – Pursue implementing a limited harvest of bull trout under 4(d) rule if we can get this through the federal process.

Rationale: We believe a limited harvest on bull trout is appropriate because the Pend Oreille system has a surplus number of spawning escapement above the USFWS recovery plan criteria.

**Clearwater**

15. General bass rule for the region would be six, no size limit. Two exceptions in the current fish rules would still apply.

Rationale: This is really no change in the rules, but this would clarify bass rules in the region and remove many lines in the rules pamphlet which state this is an exception to the southern Idaho general bass rule.

16. Allow the use of insects and insect larvae as bait during the winter stream season.

Rationale: This would restore a traditional whitefish fishing method in some regional streams.

17. Remove Hoodoo Lake, Palouse River and Soldiers Meadow Reservoir from the list of Family Fishing Waters.

Rationale: These waters just didn't work as family fishing sites, and this change will not actually result in a change in any fishing opportunity since the general trout and bass limits would still apply.

**Southwest**

18. Little Salmon River: Delete exception to the general season, general rules apply.

Rationale: To simplify rules and liberalize fishing opportunity, general fishing season would open Memorial Day Weekend instead of July 16.

19. Blackwell Lake (an alpine lake in the Payette Lake drainage): Remove from exceptions, general rules apply.

Rationale: This lake didn't have the productivity to grow 20" trout. Seven other mountain lakes in the region should satisfy the trophy trout component.

20. Cascade Aquarium Pond: When this comes on line (maybe in 2007), the City of Cascade has requested it not be open for fishing. This allows enforcement of fish related problems similar to problems observed at the MK Nature Center Ponds.

Rationale: This will be an educational facility, no fishing should be allowed.

**Magic Valley**

21. Standardize the creel limit throughout the Silver Creek drainage. Place rainbow trout under catch-and-release rules; allow the harvest of six brown trout. Keep the existing season and gear rules in place.

Rationale: Rule simplification, currently 6 different segments in rule book. Would protect rainbow throughout drainage but still allow harvest opportunity on brown trout. There would still be Fly Fishing only restriction on The Nature Conservancy property.

22. Eliminate boat restrictions on Silver Creek, except the “no motors” exception.  
Rationale: Rule simplification. Many anglers are confused why they can not use single occupancy pontoon boats. Lack of access will restrict use of larger craft.

23. Delete Lime Creek exception from the rules, general rules apply.  
Rationale: Rule simplification, limited use by anglers in this drainage does not result in excessive harvest.

### **Southeast**

24. Reduce the creel limit on bass in the Snake River (from a posted boundary near Gifford Springs to American Falls Dam) from six bass, none less than 12 inches to two bass, any size may be kept.

Rationale: Reducing bass harvest will provide better stock densities and provide for additional quality bass.

25. Change Treasureton Reservoir to a trophy rule (two trout, none under 20 inches, no bait, barbless hooks). The only change here is to increase from 16 to 20 inches.

Rationale: Increasing the minimum size restriction will increase the potential for trophy sized trout.

26. Remove “float tubes only” restriction on Winder and Weston reservoirs. Change to “no motors.”

Rationale: Rule simplification. No motors requested by water managers.

27. On Bear Lake, change the ice fishing rule from “one line only while ice fishing” to “two lines only while ice fishing” to make our rules consistent with Utah rules. The two pole permit will be consistent with Utah’s rule too.

Rationale: Consistency with Utah

28. Add Devil Creek Reservoir to the Family Fishing Water list.

Rationale: Provide an additional water targeting Family Fishing.

29. Remove Trail Creek from the regional exceptions. It would then have the same rules as the rest of the Blackfoot River drainage above Blackfoot Reservoir.

Rationale: Rule simplification and greater protection of limited numbers of Yellowstone cutthroat trout in the Blackfoot drainage.

### **Upper Snake**

30. Extend the fishing season on Henrys Lake tributaries, so they are open from July 1 to November 30. Currently the tributaries are only open in August.

Rationale: Rule simplification. Recent information has demonstrated that natural brook trout production contributes very little to the fishery, so the August 30 closure serves no purpose. A July 1 opener is consistent with protection for other cutthroat spawning streams. Spawner counts in the Henrys Lake tributaries have demonstrated that cutthroat trout are generally done spawning by mid-June. This rule would provide more opportunity and eliminate an unnecessarily restricted season.

31. Open Ririe Reservoir to year round fishing. Except that ice fishing will be allowed only from the dam to the posted boundary approximately one mile upstream.

Rationale: Currently the reservoir is closed to fishing (but not boating) for the month of April to prevent disturbance to wintering wildlife. Wildlife biologists no longer see a need for the April closure as long as the Blacktail Access area is closed until May. In fact, there is speculation that boating and angling activity would be more disturbing to elk than deer, which is consistent with efforts to prevent elk wintering in the Willow Creek canyon. Ice fishing restriction reflects a county ordinance on reservoir.

32. Add three mountain lakes (Swauger, Fishpole, and Long lakes) to the regional exceptions as trophy fisheries with 2 trout, none less than 20 inches rules.

Rationale: This provides a variety of fishing opportunity to meet public request in angler opinion survey. Lakes are located near several other alpine lakes with general rules for harvest opportunity.

33. Two items of clarification, but not rule changes are worth pointing out. We plan to move the "posted boundaries" out from Staley Springs at Henrys Lake to reduce trespass issues on private property. We will add clarifying language to allow anglers to keep 6 trout (including cutthroat) from the Dry Beds, beginning at the Big Feeder Irrigation Diversion.

Rationale: Although not rule changes, we should inform public we are moving a posted boundary to meet private property and fishery needs. Wording can be added to rule book to clarify what can be taken in Dry Beds.

## **Salmon**

| No changes proposed.